

Michigan Election Reform Alliance.org - Testimony

Statement to the House Committee on Redistricting and Elections

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Regarding HB 5061 and S 751 Absent Voter Photo ID

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Photo ID Is Unnecessary for Absentee Ballot Security

Current law requires that election officials compare the signature on voters' application for an absentee ballot with the signature on their voter registration master card. When the absentee voter returns their ballot, the law requires that the ballot number match the ballot that was sent to the absentee voter. There must also be a second signature check between the signature on the envelope containing the absentee ballot and the voter registration master card. These requirements have produced excellent security.

To create a standard for matching the AV ballot signature, election law requires that a voter sign an application to vote in front of an Election Official. Forging such a signature would be very difficult. There have not been any instances where voters have been prosecuted for forging a signature.

Substituting the use of Picture IDs as a means of identification takes the responsibility for election security away from the sworn Election Officials and places it with unknown creators of those IDs. As many underage drinkers know, it is relatively easy to purchase fake IDs on the black market.

The technology for faking picture IDs took a quantum leap when color copiers and laminators became common. Institutions battled back by incorporating new technologies such as holograph pictures, water marks, ultraviolet writing and new materials. The black market responded by producing more convincing fakes using the same technologies.

There has been no evidence presented to the public to show that the use of Picture IDs is more secure than the use of signature comparisons. There also has been no evidence presented that there is a significant number—or any number at all—of people attempting to forge signatures in order to vote.

The use of Picture IDs is unnecessary since it promises to solve a problem that does not exist. It is also a technology that is less secure than the signature technology already incorporated in our Michigan Election Law.